

ISRAEL
PROGRAM 3 (#911163)
WEEK 1 (#911333)
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SERIES: Israel

TITLE: Program 3 – Get A Grip On God

WEDNESDAY

OPEN

Are there times when you feel like your problems are absolutely insurmountable, like you can't make it, like you're wandering in a wilderness? Precious one, God has a word for you today, a word of encouragement, a word of strength, a word of power. God wants you to know, you can make it by getting a grip on the God that has a grip on you.

PART ONE

You know it seems that since September 11th, we have been so aware of our vulnerability. We have been caught up in fear, fear that immobilizes us, fear that that keeps us shut in, fear that keeps us from living life as we ought to live it. It looks like there's an enemy out there and we don't know where that enemy is hiding. And when is that enemy going rear its ugly head and what is the enemy going to do to me? You know, God has a word for you and for me in these times. And it comes from the book of Joshua. As you open the

book of Joshua, you see Joshua standing to the east of the Jordan River. Let me explain to you where I am right now. I'm in Israel. And I'm in the Judean wilderness. And if you'll follow me and as I give you just a little orientation to where we are, I think it will help put you into the geographical context of all that Joshua and those two million Israelites were going to face as God prepared to take them across the Jordan River into a land where the enemy dwelt, into a land that God had promised them, but into a land where there were giants and they felt as grasshoppers in their sight. Joshua would cross that Jordan River. The first city that they would take would be Jericho. And then A-i, or ah-e, however you want to pronounce it. That would be the second city that they would take. That's where they would be defeated. Then the kings of Jerusalem, of the Jebusite city, would hear about this battle. Because eventually they would defeat Ai. And in the distance, the outskirts of the city of Jerusalem. We are in the Judean wilderness. This is what Moses could see from Mt. Nebo. He could see the lush valleys of Jericho. He could see the Wilderness Mountains. And then this is what Joshua would see also. And this is the land that they would come through. This is the wilderness. They would make a three prong attack. First of all they would come across the Jordan and they would go straight into the land. And then they would have two other campaigns, the southern campaign and the northern campaign. Joshua had been called by God. Joshua was God's man for this hour. And what was God saying to Joshua? Because, what God said to Joshua, Precious One, God's saying to you today. You see, the Bible tells us in Romans, ["That the things that were written beforehand were written for our encouragement. They were written for our instruction upon whom the end of the ages has come."] (PARAPHRASE Romans 15:4) So let's see what God says to Joshua. Let me take you to Joshua, chapter 1. It says, "Now it came about after the death of Moses the servant of the Lord, that the Lord spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' servant saying, 'Moses My servant is dead; now therefore... cross this Jordan, you and all this people, to

the land [that] I am giving to them, to the sons of Israel.” (Joshua 1:1-2)

What I want you to know and understand, and this is so important, if you’re going to make it through your wilderness experience, if you’re going to overcome your fear, if you’re not going to be dismayed by your enemies or anything that comes against you, the thing that you need to understand is this, that God is God, that this earth is God’s. Genesis, chapter 1 says, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” (Genesis 1:1) The Bible tells us in the Psalms that, “The earth is the Lord’s, and the fullness thereof...” (Psalm 24:1a, KJV) He is creator. He is the sovereign ruler of all mankind. He is the God of all the nations. Not that the nations acknowledge Him, but He is the God that rules over all the nations. And He is able to say, “This is what I want. This is what I will do.” And as Isaiah says, [“What God has purposed, no man shall thwart.”] (PARAPHRASE Isaiah 14:27)

What God has planned no one can stop, because He is God. And so He says, [“I want you to pass into a land...,”] Now listen carefully. [“...that I have already given. I have already given.”] (PARAPHRASE Joshua 1:2b) You know, just before Jesus went to the cross, He gathered His disciples around Him in the upper room. And then we have what He called the upper room discourse. And in the midst of that upper room discourse in John, chapter 16, Jesus says, “These things I have spoken to you...,” He says, “...In the world, you[re going to] have tribulation, but...I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33) Now He wants us to understand that. “You’re going to have tribulation. But in that tribulation, you can walk in the eye of the storm. You can walk in My peace.” And you walk in His peace by knowing who He is, by knowing that He is God and there is no other. Joshua is about to come in with those two million Jews. That’s what they estimate and take this land. A land that God had given to them as an everlasting possession. And what did Joshua need to believe? Joshua needed to believe the same thing, beloved, that you need to believe, that you need to know, that you need to understand. And that is that He is God, that the earth is His and the fullness thereof. So

He says, “Every place on which the sole of your foot treads, I have given it to you....”(Joshua 1:3a) This is where the sole of the their foot would tread. Not only in the cities, not only in the lush green valleys, but every place as they come through this Judean wilderness, every wadi that they would pass through. “Every place that the sole of your foot treads, I have given it to you....,” He says, “...From the wilderness and this Lebanon....,” all the way up to the north, from the wilderness, “...and this Lebanon, even as far as the great river, the river Euphrates....,” all the way to the north, “...all the land of the Hittites, and [to] the Great Sea....”(Joshua 1:3-4a) [“All the way beyond here, beyond Jerusalem and all the way to the great sea, to the very coastline. I have given it to you.”](PARAPHRASE Joshua 1:4a) He says, “...toward the setting of the sun will be your territory.”(1:4b) Now this is east, the setting of the sun is beyond Jerusalem to the Mediterranean Sea. And then He says, “No man will be able to stand before you all the days of your life....”(1:5a) He says, [“I want you to know. I want you to know that when you come up against that enemy, that that enemy will not be able to stand against you. That enemy will not be able to resist you.”] (PARAPHRASE 1:5a) He says, “[Even] as I [was] with Moses, [so] I [shall] be with you....”(1:5b) And Joshua understood what it was that God was saying. Joshua understood the import of God’s words because Joshua had been a servant of Moses. The first time that you meet Joshua in the Word of God, you meet him as a warrior. You meet him as he’s there in the wilderness of Sin, as he’s there fighting against the Amalikites. And the Amalikites come against him and he’s down in the valley and as he fights, the enemy is overpowering him. Moses goes to the top of the mountain and Moses lifts up his rod and Moses stands there with a rod of God lifted high in his hands. And what happens down in the valley? Joshua begins to overpower the enemy. Moses’ arms get tired. They come down. And then the enemy begins to overpower Joshua and so Aaron and Hur come along and hold up Moses’ hands with the rod of God, the staff of God in their

hands and Joshua prevails. Joshua knows the power of God. Joshua has watched God part the Red Sea. Joshua has seen God provide manna in a wilderness, in a desert like this where they couldn't possible grow their food. There was something that he understood and he understood it because of the meaning of his name. You see, Yehowshua, that's the way you would say Joshua. Yehowshua means "the Lord is my salvation." Yehowshua has the name of God in it. Like Abram was changed to Abraham. God put His name in Abraham's name, in Abram's name. And when we look at Jeshua, when we look at Jesus we see that that means salvation. And what God said to Joshua from the very day of his birth is this: "The Lord is your salvation." Joshua has seen God defeat the enemy, Shihon and Og, on the other side of the Jordan. And God's promise to Joshua is this: "...as I have been with Moses, [so] I will be with you..."(1:5b) His next words, Beloved, are words that you need to see, that you need to hear, that you need to get a grip on, because there is your strength and there you will find your courage to go on. We'll talk about it when I come back.

PART TWO

Now as God tells Joshua: ["This is the land and you're to take it and you're to give the people the possession of the land that I have given them."] (PARAPHRASE Joshua 1:2-4) This is what He promises them and let's look at it. He says, "No man will be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I have been with Moses, I will be with you; I will not fail you, [n]or forsake you."(1:5) What was he saying to Joshua? "I have you in My grip." The word for fail here is "rapha". And it means "I will not slacken My grip on you." In other words, ["If you start to fall, if you start to go backwards, I won't fail you. I can hold you up. I will not slacken My hand. You will not slip out of My hand. I will not fail you and I will not forsake you. I will not abandon you."] Now listen, Precious One, I don't know if you know God or not or if you can come running into His presence and call Him

“Abba Father”. But I will tell you this, that if you can run into His presence, if you have come to the only means of salvation, which is Jeshua, which is Jesus. “...there is salvation in no [other]; for there is no other name under heaven...given among men [whereby] we must be saved.”(Acts 4:12) Jesus is the Son of God. Jesus is God incarnate. Jesus is God made flesh. Jesus is the way. He’s the truth and He’s the life and apart from Him there is no life. And what God is saying to you is that if you are His child then He has you in His grip. He will not fail you. He will not forsake you. You say, “But He said that to Joshua.” Listen, Precious One, He didn’t say it just to Joshua. Because if you would go with me to Hebrews, chapter 13, verse 5 and 6, He says, “Let your life be free from the love of money....” Hebrews 13, verse 5 and 6, “...for He has said to you...” Give me your hand again, please. “... ‘I will never leave you, [I will never] forsake you’, so that [you can] boldly say, ‘The Lord is my helper I will not fear what [man shall do unto me].’”(Mix of NASB and NKJV Hebrews 13:5-6) God has you in His grip. Now listen. These are God’s words to Joshua. But then He has an instruction to Joshua. And I want us to take a moment to look at that instruction that He gives to Joshua. And it is in chapter 1 and it’s in verses 7 through 9. He says, “...be strong and [be] courageous...”(Joshua 1:7a) For you shall give this people possession of this land. He says, “Only be strong and very courageous; be careful to do according to all the law which Moses My servant [has] commanded you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, so that you may have success [and that you may prosper] wherever you go. This book of the Law shall not depart [out of] your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night...,” He says, “...so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.” (Joshua 1:7-8) Do you hear the “thens”? What is He saying? “Look, this is the way that you’re to walk. This is what I command you. This is what you are to do. This is how you are to obey. This is what I have set forth for you in My Word.” And He says,

“Now, don’t turn to the right and don’t turn to the left.” He says, [“You observe to do according to all that I have commanded you and when you do this then you will have success.”](PARAPHRASE 1:8) When you do this Precious One, then you will prosper. You say, “How do I do that?” Well you have to understand that in this Book are the very words of life. You know Jesus said, [“I fed you with manna in the wilderness because I wanted you to understand that man doesn’t live by bread alone, but He lives by every word that comes out of the mouth of God.”] (PARAPHRASE Deuteronomy 8:3) So what is He saying? [“I want you to contemplate My Word. I want you to meditate on My Word. I want you to understand what My Word says. And I want you to live according to it.”] (Joshua 1:8) And then He says again, “[...] [Only] be strong and courageous!”(1:9a) Now let me show you what those words mean. First of all, the word “strong” in the Hebrew is “chazaq” and it means to fasten, to seize. God says, “I have you in My grip. I have you in My grip.” But now what does God want? God wants you to get a grip on Him. He says, “I want you to be strong. I want you to be courageous. Don’t let your hand just dangle around here. Don’t be fearing and trembling and all that. Instead, get a grip on Me.” God has a grip on you. And if you’re going to make it in this desert, if you’re going to make it through the wilderness, if you’re going to make it when you face your enemies, what do you have to do? God has a grip on you and you have to get a grip on God. So what He’s saying to Joshua is this: “I want you to be strong. I want you to get a grip on Me. I want you to seize me. I want you to fasten on to me. I want you to hang on to me and I don’t want you to ever let go” And then He says, “And I want you to be courageous.” Now listen, to be courageous means to be alert. It means to be alert physically. It means to be alert mentally. It means that you’ve got your head screwed on right. It means that you’re not tossed to and fro by all these rumors and all these claims. Listen, a sovereign God has you in His grip. And you in turn are to get a grip on God. You are to be strong. And you are to be courageous. And then He goes on to say, [You are

not to tremble.] “Do[n’t] tremble [and don’t] be dismayed....” (1:9b)

Dismayed means to break down, to break somebody down by confusion, to break somebody down by fear, to break somebody down by violence. And you don’t have to be, you don’t have to be dismayed, Beloved. Why? Because you’ve got the Word of God. Because you know who God is. Because you’re able to run to Him and to cry, “Abba, Father.” Because God has you in His grip and you have God in your grip. And what’s His promise to you? “Then you will have success.” Now success means this. Success means that you can look at all these situations, think them through and come to that logical conclusion that you should come to. In other words it means, that all the information that is thrown at you does not cause confusion, does not cause fear, but you come to the very end result of all that information. It means an intelligent knowledge of the reason. It’s a process of thinking through a complex arrangement of thoughts that results in wise dealing. So that you walk as a man or a woman or a teen of wisdom. You’ve got it figured out. You understand the situation and you’re not tossed to and fro by everything, every wind that comes along and causes you confusion. And then what does He say? Not only will you have success, but you’ll prosper. You say, “Oh good, I’ll be wealthy.” No that’s not at all what He’s talking about. He’s talking about something that is far greater than wealth. It means that you will arrive at the goal that God has for you. And that’s exactly what Joshua did in this wilderness. And that’s exactly what you can do if you’ll be strong and courageous and get a grip on God, who has a grip on you.